

NEWS RELEASE



STATE OF ALABAMA
Department of Industrial
Relations
News For Immediate Release
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Alabama December Unemployment Rate Remains Unchanged

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, January 2, 2004 Alabama's unemployment rate of 5.8 percent in December is unchanged from the November jobless rate, but below the 5.9 percent recorded a year ago.

The comparable national unemployment rate for December was 5.7 percent, a decline from the November rate of 5.9 percent and below the year-ago rate of 6.0 percent.

"December was the only month in 2003 when the state rate was above the national unemployment rate," says Phyllis Kennedy, director of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. "Also, in 2002 the average unemployment was 5.9 percent in Alabama, and in all of 2003 the jobless figure never exceeded 5.8 percent. The official average unemployment rate for 2003 is expected to be published early March after benchmarking of statistical data is complete."

Alabama's December rate represents 125,000 unemployed persons, compared to 125,900 last month and 124,300 in December 2002.

Over the past year, there was a decline of 10,400 jobs with notable losses occurring in manufacturing (-8,900), educational and health services (-1,700), and government (-1,800). Construction employment increased 2,100 over the year.

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County unemployment rates, Metropolitan Area Unemployment Rates, and an Alabama map of county unemployment rates, are available at: www.dir.state.al.us. Click on "Alabama Labor Market Information Division" under "Quick Links" and follow prompts.